

What is an Ombudsman?

The City Ombudsman is an appointed official who acts independently to receive and investigate complaints from residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors. In accordance with the City Charter, the Ombudsman also submits periodic reports to the City Council and makes recommendations to resolve ongoing complaints.

Office of the Ombudsman
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 114
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 224-6000

Sign up for E-mail alerts

Periodically, the City Ombudsman will issue e-mail alerts and broadcasts to announce outreach programs, reinstitution of bulk pick-up schedules, reports, event information, meetings, etc. If you want to be added to the e-mail distribution list and receive e-mail alerts, go to the Ombudsman's Web site; select "Feedback" found at the top of the home page, and enter your e-mail address. The Ombudsman's Web site can be accessed through the city's Web site at www.ci.detroit.mi.us.

Office of the Ombudsman Hours

8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday



Ombudsman's Newsletter

"Getting Problems Out of the Way So That Progress Can Occur"

July 2006

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Ombudsman says 'Call Us First!'

The newly appointed Ombudsman has completed several major projects since taking office last year in October. Shortly after the City Council appointed Durene L. Brown the fourth City Ombudsman in the city's history, Ms. Brown initiated a community outreach program in February 2006, "Call Us First!"



*Durene L. Brown
City of Detroit
Ombudsman*

"Call Us First!" was a series of day-long events held at five, public library branches around the City. Nearly 200 people participated, and we logged more than 300 complaints from individual residents, community groups, block clubs, churches, and neighborhood associations.

"Our plan to gain the trust of residents and increase our credibility in the community was kicked off with this outreach program," Brown said. She said that residents, property owners, community groups, block clubs, churches, and neighborhood associations participated.

Brown said that the "Call Us First!" program would be an annual event that will be held again in February 2007. "I'm hoping to build on

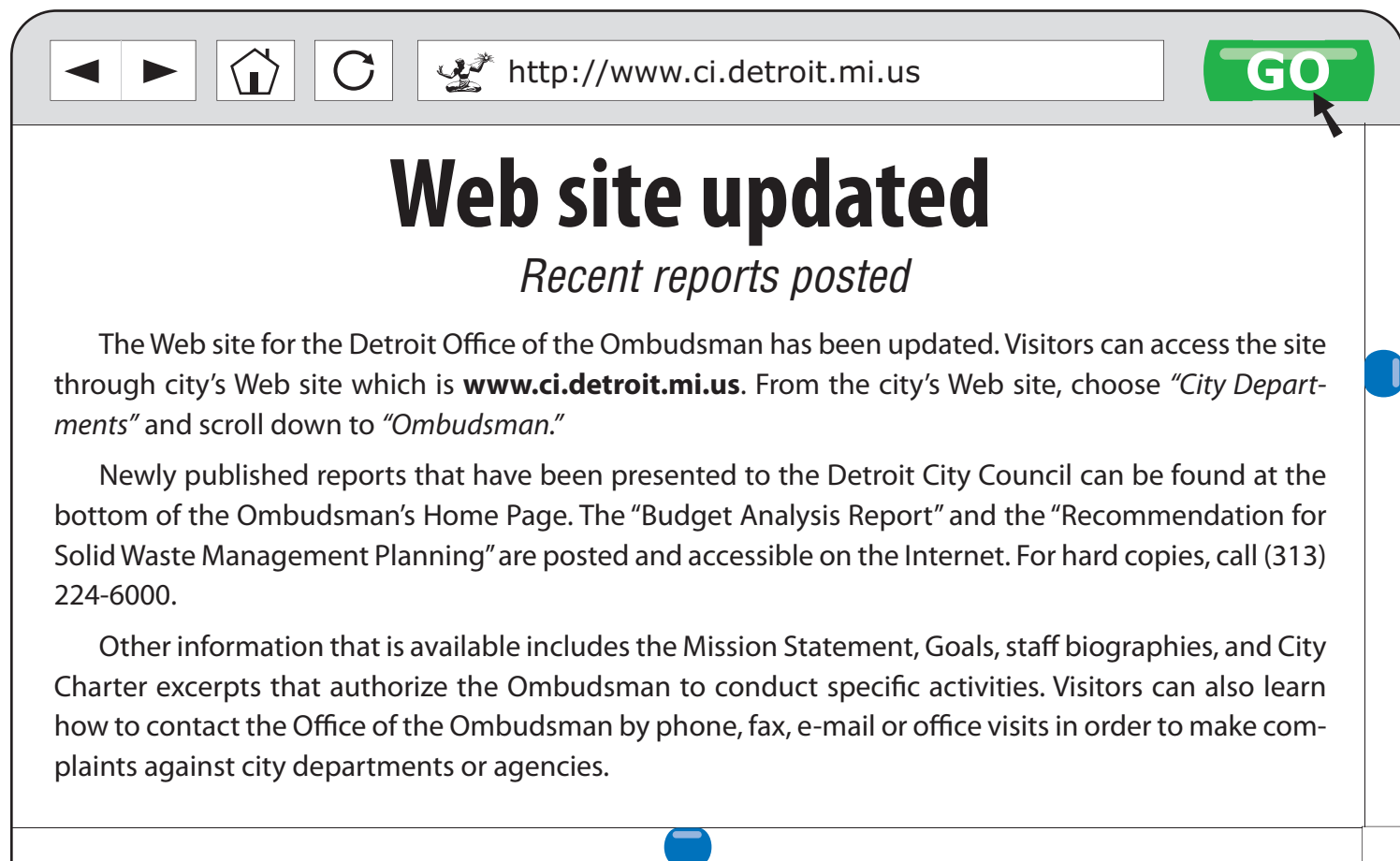
our prior success and increase the number of participants next year." Dates, time, and locations for the next "Call Us First!" program will be posted on the Web site before the end of the year.



Residents meeting with service providers



Assistant Ombudsman Darlene Williams with THAW representative.



◀ ▶ Home Refresh http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us **GO**

Web site updated

Recent reports posted

The Web site for the Detroit Office of the Ombudsman has been updated. Visitors can access the site through city's Web site which is **www.ci.detroit.mi.us**. From the city's Web site, choose "City Departments" and scroll down to "Ombudsman."

Newly published reports that have been presented to the Detroit City Council can be found at the bottom of the Ombudsman's Home Page. The "Budget Analysis Report" and the "Recommendation for Solid Waste Management Planning" are posted and accessible on the Internet. For hard copies, call (313) 224-6000.

Other information that is available includes the Mission Statement, Goals, staff biographies, and City Charter excerpts that authorize the Ombudsman to conduct specific activities. Visitors can also learn how to contact the Office of the Ombudsman by phone, fax, e-mail or office visits in order to make complaints against city departments or agencies.

Why would you want to contact the Ombudsman?

If you have a complaint against any city department or agency, you should call the Office of the Ombudsman. Abandoned cars, illegal dumping, flooded streets, vacant/abandoned/dangerous buildings, public lighting outages, and tree trimming are some of the reasons to contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

There are several ways to reach the Office of the Ombudsman and file your complaint:

- **Telephone:** (313) 224-6000
- **Fax:** (313) 224-1911
- **E-mail:** Ombudsman@ombud.ci.detroit.mi.us
- **U.S. Mail and Walk-ins:** Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Ave., Room 114, Detroit, Michigan 48226

The City will now charge property owners \$300 a year for trash pick up. Senior citizens who are 65-years-old or older may qualify for a discount. Contact the Office of the Ombudsman to get an application form.

Ombudsman recommends legislation to designate public libraries as drug-free zones

In October 2005, City Ombudsman Durene L. Brown met with Detroit City Council President Kenneth Cockrel, Jr. and State Representative George Cushingberry, Jr. to discuss the need to amend current drug-free zones laws that apply to public schools to include public libraries.

"We respond to complaints, and when we received a complaint about illicit behavior around libraries, I immediately thought about the children and won-

dered why libraries didn't have the same protection as public schools," Brown said.

She added that she is pleased that Council President Cockrel is working on a local ordinance. Brown also reported that Representative Cushingberry introduced House Bills 5657 and 5658 in February so that the amendment would be applicable to libraries statewide.

Office of the Ombudsman will visit Seniors

City Ombudsman Durene L. Brown and her staff have scheduled time to meet with senior citizens in July and August. Brown said that her goal as City Ombudsman is to develop an outreach program and meet face-to-face with residents regularly.

"I want to work to eliminate barriers to getting problems solved, and I want to make it easy to hear from senior citizens who may not drive or cannot navigate today's technology, such as automated phone systems or electronics," Brown said.

The Office of the Ombudsman will be joined by the Office of the Detroit City Clerk Department of Elections, Detroit Area on Aging Agency, and Wayne County Sheriff's Department. Visits that have already been scheduled include:

■ **Greenhouse Apartments:** Wednesday, July 19, 2006

■ **Freedom Place:** Wednesday, July 26, 2006

Events will take place from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. A light lunch will be provided.

For additional information, contact Gail Barnard, Assistant Ombudsman, at (313) 224-6000, or e-mail barnardg@ombud.ci.detroit.mi.us.

Do you want the Ombudsman to visit your community group or neighborhood association meeting?

City Ombudsman Durene L. Brown welcomes opportunities to speak directly with residents and listen to their concerns. "In our office, 'Getting problems out of the way, so that progress can occur' is our motto," Brown said. The Ombudsman and her staff have already met with several community groups and neighborhood organizations.

For scheduling information, call **(313) 224-6000** or e-mail

ombudsman@ombud.ci.detroit.mi.us



From left to right: Khadija Ngom, Monteith Branch Librarian; Assistant Ombudsman Anna Ferrante-Thomas, City Ombudsman Durene Brown, Assistant Ombudsman Gail Barnard, Assistant Ombudsman Darlene Williams and Deputy City Ombudsman John Binion